

Cogongrass Task Force: Teaming Up to Battle a Common Enemy

By Elishia Ballentine, Editor

It's the most unwanted of all pest plant species in Alabama – in the whole Southeast for that matter – and a number of state and federal agencies and private entities have declared war against it . . . cogongrass, *Imperata cylindrica*.

It was a momentous occasion on Tuesday, May 13, 2008, when 22 different representatives officially entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to team up in the battle against this non-native, invasive weed. The signing event took place at the 4-H Center in Columbiana where a large group of foresters and other natural

resources professionals met for the Sixth Annual Conference of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council (ALIPC).

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a mutually agreeable framework for collaboratively combating the short- and long-term negative effects of the grass within the state. All parties agree it is to their mutual benefit and the natural environment of the state to work cooperatively to educate, train, and share technology between partners and the general public about cogongrass and the serious impacts this plant could have on our natural environment if left to spread unchecked. By signing the agreement, the partners committed to facilitating a voluntary and cooperative effort in providing a means of control, suppression, or eradication of this pest species across Alabama.

State Forester Linda Casey said, "All of these partners fully recognize the threat that cogongrass poses to the farmers, ranchers, foresters, private landowners, as well as to public lands within Alabama. Cogongrass is everyone's problem. This partnership brings all the stakeholders together to eliminate this destructive weed." Casey noted that, "All parties on the MOU agree that it is to their mutual interest and benefit to work together in education and detection, as well as inventorying, monitoring, controlling, and preventing the spread of



Declaration of War on Cogongrass - Some of the representatives of the 22 Alabama partners who gathered on May 13, 2008, officially signing an agreement to collaboratively combat the non-native, invasive weed across the state.

cogongrass. A united front will strengthen us across all boundaries so that we will be able to better leverage our resources and more effectively provide service and protection to the people and landowners of Alabama."

Authorized representatives from the following cooperators have signed or will sign the agreement: Alabama Forestry Commission; Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries; Alabama Department of Transportation; Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries; Alabama Cooperative Extension Service; Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee; Alabama Invasive Plant Council; Auburn University; Alabama Cattleman's Association; Alabama Forestry Association; Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA); Alabama Wildlife Federation; Resource Management Service, LLC; USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine; USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection, Southern Region; USDA Forest Service National Forests in Alabama; USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station; US Army Corps of Engineers; Custom Air and Herbicides Plus, LLC; and UAP Distribution, Inc. 🌱